

Dear Members of Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Eric Cruz Lopez and I live in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I stand in support of S.B. 13: **AN ACT CONCERNING FAIR TREATMENT OF INCARCERATED WOMEN**. As a state it is time that we respect the human rights of ALL women. Women who are incarcerated deserve to live with dignity, respect and the assurance that their state will protect them from harmful practices.

This is very important to me because at age 7 when I crossed the border for the first time into the US, my mother, brother, and I spent some time in a detention facility. Do not make a mistake, detention facilities are basically jails and prisons. So, at age 7 I was behind bars with my mom and my brother. Though our time in that detention facility was short, the impact of it still carries to this day. I could not imagine what my own mother would have gone through had she crossed the border when pregnant with either me or my brother, there is mounting evidence that detention centers, jails, and prisons violate the basic human rights of all people. Still, we know that those human rights violations are more egregious for women and especially pregnant women.

Part of this bill would also establish family centric policies that would allow families time to build together and remain together. Something that I had while in a detention center with my mother, I only had it because we were all locked up together. I could not imagine going through that experience by myself or my mother going through that experience by herself.

I am also here to support HB 5544 **AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION WITH RESPECT TO MISDEMEANOR SENTENCES**. Which would reduce the maximum sentences for misdemeanor offenses from 365 days to 364 days. I support this bill because having misdemeanor convictions carry a max 365 day sentence has resulted in two of my friends who were permanent residents to be deported.

This is not a testimony to serve as a judgement of the moral character of the people I grew up with, but rather the morality of laws that create a situation of double jeopardy for those that enter into these proceedings. If misdemeanor sentences carried a maximum sentence of 364 days part of my community and the community of bridgeport wouldn't have been ripped apart.

The way the system currently works individual and families are facing punishment and hardship that is not commensurate with the original conviction. They are getting punished twice, once for the conviction, and then again when they face consequences for immigration. By one day families are getting torn apart and individuals are losing the chance to re-build their lives.

I hope the committee votes favorably on both of these bills.

Thank you